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## U.S., GLOBAL BANKS UNVEIL PLAN TO TACKLE FOOD CRISIS

**Billions of dollars to be spent on helping farmers, boosting fertiliser supply and developing land for food production**

### WORLD BANK TO CONTRIBUTE $30 BILLION

The US Treasury Department said several global development banks will work together to address the food security crisis exacerbated by Russia's war in Ukraine. The World Bank announced it will contribute $30 billion for projects to address food crisis. The Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank, among others, will also chip in

### BLINKEN CHAIRS MEET ON FOOD SECURITY

- A two-day Global Food Security Call to Action meeting of foreign ministers from 30 countries, chaired by US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken began past midnight on Wednesday, in New York
- Russia and Ukraine produce a third of the world's wheat, and the disruption of supply due to the war has led to prices soaring

**193 million**

PEOPLE EXPERIENCED ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY WORLDWIDE IN 2021

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

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# PM's economic advisory panel proposes urban job guarantee scheme

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

WITH income inequality in the country becoming starker, the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) on Wednesday proposed implementing an urban employment guarantee scheme on the lines of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). The panel raised concerns over growing inequality as captured in *The State of Inequality in India Report* released by it.

The report said the labour force participation rate in the country was 51.5% in 2019-20, which was better than the 49% in 2017-18. However, the participation rate of those educated till higher secondary over three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20 was significantly low at 40-43%.

The clamour for an urban jobs scheme has been growing louder in recent times with increasing income inequality and job losses. Experts said an urban-focused employment guarantee scheme will go a long way in supporting consumption. Talking to this newspaper earlier this year, BJP MP and chairman of the parliamentary committee on finance Jayant Sinha had said that a scheme like MGNREGA for urban informal sector workers could be designed with the help of digital infrastructure that the government has already built.

The EAC-PM also recommended that raising minimum income and introducing a universal basic income are some of the measures that can reduce the income gap and facilitate equal distribution of earnings in the labour market.

**FIGURE IT OUT**

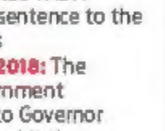
**90%** of India's population survives on less than ₹25,000 a month

**6.82%** of total annual wages earned by richest 1%

**35%** of total annual wages earned by richest 10%

**1.7%** of the total annual cumulative wages earned by poorest 10%

**Income profile**




Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey 2019-20

# RAIN FURY KILLS 2 LABOURERS, FLOODS B'LURU

City receives average rainfall of 114 mm, highest in May since 1909; 16 trees fall

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

HEAVY pre-monsoon showers lashed Bengaluru with an average of 114 mm rainfall recorded on Tuesday night. Eleven areas in Bengaluru recorded more than 100 mm of rainfall, while 17 received over 50 mm of rain. This is the highest single-day rainfall for the city for May since 1909, India Meteorological Department officials said.

Two labourers, who were working on the Cauvery Water Supply Scheme Stage 5, drowned inside the pipeline after water gushed into it following heavy rain around 7 pm on Tuesday. The incident occurred near Upkar Layout in Jnanabharathi police limits.

Not just low-lying areas, even posh localities were flooded with water gushing into over 30 houses in Horamavu, Basaveshwara Nagar, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Hosakerehalli and Dattatreya Layout. HSR Layout, Dasarahalli Layout, Chokkasandra, Shettyhalli, Rajajinagar, Basaveshwara Nagar and UB City too reported flooding. In all, 16 trees were uprooted in the city.

**CM announces ₹25,000 aid to damaged homes**

CM Basavaraj Bommai on Wednesday announced a compensation of ₹25,000 to families living in each of the houses that were flooded following Tuesday's heavy downpour. Bommai visited rain-hit areas of Hosakerehalli and Rajarajeshwarinagar. P3

Overflowing manholes affected traffic movement on Racecourse Road, while the ongoing white-topping works caused traffic jams in Malleswaram. The road works that started in March were to be completed by May 10.

At Yetaganahalli near Devanahalli, motorists were forced to abandon their vehicles and walk for nearly 3 km as an underpass was flooded. In Rajarajeshwari Nagar, residents baled out water from their homes, while apartment dwellers pumped rainwater out of their basements on Wednesday morning. "No BBMP officials have come to help us. Every time it rains, we are left to fend for ourselves," said Prasad, a resident. P2,5

BBMP workers carry food packets on a tractor on Wednesday to distribute to residents of Vaddarapalya near Horamavu after Tuesday's heavy downpour inundated several localities in Bengaluru | SHRIRAM BN

# When the nightmare in a flooded underpass was drowned by humanity

RAMU PATIL @Bengaluru

"HELP.... help... help... help.....!" I was pleading as I stood in knee-deep water, trying to push my car back after unknowingly driving into the flooded underpass connecting Sahakara Nagar with Canara Bank Layout. And help came unconditionally from absolute strangers riding on sheer humanity — nothing else.

It was around 10 pm, pitch-dark, and describing the rains as "heavy" would be an understatement. And there was no sign of the water receding.

As Bengaluru received 11.4 cm of rainfall in just 90 minutes between 8 and 9.30 pm on Tuesday night, many locations — including the underpass which held me captive — were flooded.

How did I get into this? Thanks to the torrential downpour and low visibility as I drove, I failed to see the danger ahead, until I got into it. With restricted vision, car wipers unable to match the rain's intensity, and limited reach of the headlights, I failed to gauge the level of water in the underpass.

Drenched to the bone, my mobile non-functional, my car starting to get filled with water, and not a soul in sight to respond to my calls for help, I became aware of the helpless situation I had got into. As I tried to come to terms with the foolishness of venturing into an underpass in such torrential rain, I spotted two youths rushing towards me from the other side of the underpass, which was much safer than where I was. P2

# Perarivalan freed by SC after 31 yrs

ENS @ Chennai/New Delhi

"LET me breathe; I'm free after 31 years," said A G Perarivalan, a life convict in the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, after the Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered his release by invoking its extraordinary power under Article 142 of the Constitution.

A bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao, B R Gavai, and A S Bopanna, who held that the advice of State Cabinet is binding on Governor in exercise of powers under Article 161, said the Governor's referral to the President of the recommendation of the Tamil Nadu Cabinet (to grant pardon to all seven convicts in the case) two-and-a-half years after it was made doesn't have constitutional backing.

Non-exercise of power under Article 161 or inexplicable delay in exercise of such power, which is not attributable to the prisoner, is subject to judicial review of the court, said the judges rejecting the Centre's argument that in some cases President and not the Governor is the competent authority to grant pardon.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin hailed the verdict as a victory for State rights and federalism. "The verdict has established that Governors cannot interfere in political and policy decisions of States. It is important to note that the judges have said that when Governor becomes inactive, court will intervene," the CM said.

Speaking to reporters, Perarivalan credited his mother, 74-year-old Arputhammal, for her sacrifices and non-stop efforts that eventually led to his release. "She has faced insults, she was ignored, and she suffered agony. Despite all that she was persistent and fought for me without a break for 30 long years," he said.

AG Perarivalan and his mother Arputhammal meet Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Wednesday to express their gratitude | EXPRESS

**A BRIEF TIMELINE**

**June 11, 1991:** CBI arrests 19-year-old AG Perarivalan in Rajiv Gandhi Assassination case
**1999:** SC upholds TADA court's death sentence to the seven convicts
**September 9, 2018:** The AIADMK government recommends to Governor Banwarilal Purohit the release of all seven convicts
**May 10, 2022:** SC orders release of Perarivalan invoking Article 142

Arputhammal profusely thanked everyone — from the State government to sympathisers — for their support in getting her son released.

While the AIADMK, the BJP, Left parties, the PMK and various Tamil outfits welcomed the verdict, the State unit of the Congress was circumspect in its reaction. "We do not wish to criticise the judgment of the Supreme Court," Tamil Nadu Congress Committee chief K S Alagiri said. "At the same time, we want to emphasise that the perpetrators are murderers and that they are not innocent."

Stalin said the Tamil Nadu State government will study the full verdict and take steps for release of the other six convicts in the case. P5

# Couple first to be charged in Kodagu under anti-conversion law

Members of Hindu groups accost Kuriachhan and Selvi at Kutta, Kodagu

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Madikeri

A couple has been arrested for alleged religious conversion of tribal people in Kodagu. The incident has been reported at Kutta.

Kuriachhan and Selvi from Mananthavady in Kerala are the arrested accused. The couple has been taken into judicial custody after being booked.

On Tuesday evening, the accused couple arrived from Kerala to the tribal settlement at Kutta. They visited the house of tribal Paniyaravara Muttha and his family. It is alleged that the couple tried to convince the family to convert to Christianity.

A few members of Hindu organisations, who were on a vigil after a few alleged religious conversions in the settlement earlier, alerted the Kutta police. The police arrived at the scene and took the two into custody.

Police sources confirmed that the accused have been booked under Section 295 A, which is the existing law against forcible conversions. "The gazette notification of the recently passed anti-conversion law has not reached us yet. That is the reason the accused have been booked under the old section. However, when we are filing the chargesheet, we will apply the newly passed anti-conversion law," confirmed the police.

| KARNATAKA | MAY 17 | MAY 18 |
|---|---|---|
| Fresh cases | 1,569 | 1,829 |
| Recoveries | 2,467 | 2,549 |
| Deaths | 19 | 33 |

| KARNATAKA | MAY 17 | MAY 18 |
|---|---|---|
| Fresh cases | 109 | 122 |
| Recoveries | 147 | 162 |
| Deaths | 0 | 1 |

**EXPRESS READ**

### SSLC results at 12.30pm today

Bengaluru: The SSLC results will be out at 12.30pm Thursday, and will be uploaded after 1pm on the education department website http://karresults.nic.in/. Students can get their results by entering their registration number and date of birth, as mentioned on the admission ticket. The results will be announced in more than 15,000 schools too. P3

### Hardik Patel finally pulls the Cong plug

Ahmedabad: In a blow to the Congress in poll-bound Gujarat, Patidar leader Hardik Patel resigned from its primary membership on Wednesday, saying its leadership is not serious about issues facing the people. He accused the party of being more concerned about chicken sandwich than Gujarat. The party hit back saying his words were scripted by BJP | P9

# Day after, CBI arrests Karti's aide in visa case

ENS@ Chennai

THE CBI on Wednesday arrested chartered accountant S Bhaskararaman, a close associate of Lok Sabha MP Karti Chidambaram, a day after raiding the latter's premises in connection with a ₹50 lakh bribery case for clearing visas of 263 Chinese nationals working at a power plant in Punjab.

Bhaskararaman was arrested since he was not cooperating in the investigation, CBI sources said. He was later produced before a local CBI court, which issued a transit remand to fly him to New Delhi.

Bhaskararaman was among the five named in the FIR. Other booked include Karti, Vikas Makharia, representing Talwandi Sabo Power, Mansa (Punjab); Bell Tools Ltd, Mumbai (Maharashtra) and unknown public servants and private persons. The FIR alleged that Karti was approached through Bhaskararaman to get visas to bring in more Chinese professionals to expedite work on the thermal power plant.

The visas issued were beyond the ceiling imposed by the Union home ministry. Karti allegedly negotiated the ₹50 lakh deal through Bhaskararaman. It happened in 2011 when Karti's father P Chidambaram was Union home minister.

**AGONISING WAIT**

# *15 months on, KAS aspirants still to get results*

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @Bengaluru

OVER 2,200 Karnataka Administrative Service (KAS) aspirants, who wrote their main exam in February 2021 to be in contention for the coveted posts, are still waiting for their results.

The Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC), which conducts KAS exams, has held them only four times in the last ten years. The irregular schedule in conducting the exams and the delay in announcing the results deprive KAS aspirants of opportunities, as a general merit candidate can only make five attempts before crossing the age limit of 35 years.

The KPSC conducted KAS exams in 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2020. Unlike the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), KPSC does not issue the notification for exams every year. Also, the entire process, including conducting prelims and mains, and interviews, are unduly delayed.

Last time that the KPSC issued an exam notification was in January 2020 for 106 posts for which prelims were held in August 2020. Over 1.67 lakh candidates took the exams, and of them, around 2,200 were selected to write the main exams, which were conducted in February 2021. "It's been 15 months," one of the candidates, not willing to be identified, told The New Indian Express.

The candidate said that when they appear for the exams for the first time, they will be in their early 20s. "KPSC issues the notification once every two or three years. If we cannot clear exams in the first attempt, the next chance will be only after two to three years. Since there is an age limit of 35 years for general category and 38 years for other backward class aspirants, we get very few chances. Also, there is a limit of five attempts for general category and seven for OBC aspirants," the candidate pointed out.

Another aspirant, who has already made two attempts, said he took KAS mains in February 2021, while IAS main exams were held a month previous to that. "While we are still waiting for our results, those who wrote IAS exams got their results and are selected too. Even the next IAS exam batch wrote their main exams and are almost in the final stages of selection. When UPSC with around 6 lakh candidates conducts exams successfully, why can't KPSC," the candidate asked.

Officials blame the delay on the 2015 exams where some candidates approached the Karnataka Administrative Tribunal (KAT). P4

> **While we are still waiting for our results, those who wrote IAS exams got their results and are selected too. Even the next IAS exam batch wrote their main exams and are almost in the final stages of selection** — A candidate